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Laotian believers face daily persecution

VIENTIANE, Laos (BP) — If you become an evangelical Christian in Laos, the communist neighbor of Vietnam and Cambodia, you likely will be "asked" to sign a fill-in-the-blank form.

It's not a new-member card at your neighborhood church.

The form reads in part: "I, (name), who live ... in (location), believe in a foreign religion, which the imperialists have used for their own benefit to divide the united front and to build power for themselves against the local authorities. Now, I and my family clearly see the intentions of the enemy, and regret the deeds which we have committed. We have clearly seen the goodness of the Party and the Government...."

"Therefore, I and my family ... voluntarily and unequivocally resign from believing in this foreign religion."

If you sign, you also promise not to participate in this "foreign religion" — Christianity in every reported case — or any of its meetings and ceremonies. You also agree that if the authorities should catch you continuing to practice your faith, you must "accept that the government shall do to me whatever is required by its laws."

If you don't sign, you can expect humiliation, harassment, and persecution, including probable imprisonment. Some Christians who refuse to sign have been placed in wooden stocks.

The document's widespread, ongoing use by provincial and local Laotian officials has been authenticated by the World Evangelical Fellowship's Religious Liberty Commission and other sources. Hundreds of rural Christians reportedly have been forced to sign the form in public, then compelled to participate in animistic sacrifices.

The constitution of Laos, ratified in 1991, guarantees "the right and freedom to believe or not believe in religions," but that right apparently does not apply to evangelical Christians, who have been persecuted with increasing intensity as they have grown in number.

Though the right to believe may exist on paper, the state continues to outlaw evangelism, religious training, and church-planting.



WILL SHE HEAR? — This young girl in Laos represents many her age who will never hear about Jesus Christ if the Southeast Asian nation's communist government succeeds in its drive to stamp out Christianity. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

Despite the persecution, and in some cases because of it, Christians in Laos have more than doubled, from about 32,000 in 1997 to 80,000 or more today, according to a well-informed observer. Some estimates put the total much higher.

The government reportedly identifies Christianity as "the number one enemy of the state." It accuses Christians of undermining Laotian culture, national unity — and the traditional dominance of Buddhism, which reinforces existing social power structures.

Laotian sources have reported a new government drive,

called "The Program," that aims to eliminate Christianity in Laos by the end of this year and close all Christian places of worship in the countryside.

Some believers renounce their faith under pressure, but the crackdown often backfires:

"The local people say, 'There must be something to this if the government is taking such a strong stand against it. It must be right,'" the observer stated. As for Christians themselves, "We've seen people grow stronger in the midst of persecution. Once they've been refined by it, their faith is just so strong."

Some jailed believers were released in June, but up to 100 remain in custody, according to reports. That may just be the "tip of the iceberg," the source said. In rural areas, "there could be a couple of hundred or even more."

Home to about 5,000,000 people, Laos has been ruled by the socialist Lao People's Revolutionary Party since 1975. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita income of \$350.

Laos has experienced marked economic growth in recent years, but more than 80% of the population still depends on subsistence farming.

Most Laotians practice Buddhism or animism. Christians remain a fraction of the population, but an expanding one.

About 15,000 Christians lived in the country when the communists gained power in 1975, and many fled the country or went into hiding. The church began to expand again in 1990 as revival reportedly swept the countryside.

Another revival began in mid-1997 in an unexpected place: among the oppressed Khmu people of Laos.

"The Khmu are the second-largest people group in Laos (at about 20% of the population), but historically they have been slaves to the more powerful peoples of the region," said the observer.

History, he added, also predicted they would fall away from their new faith when challenged, "but this time they were very responsive and filled with boldness once they got the gospel."

"In one area, they took (the message) to the governor of their province. They just began to share the gospel with everyone, especially with other Khmu."

Christian literature, gospel cassettes, and gospel radio-listener groups have rapidly increased the spread of the gospel despite numerous arrests of people caught listening to Christian radio broadcasts.

Hundreds of house-church leaders have been trained and now are taking the initiative to train others.

In each of several areas, more than 3,000 people — including entire villages — decided to follow Jesus Christ within a single year.



BUDDHIST DOMINANCE — Buddhist monks receive alms from worshippers on Buddha's birthday at a temple in Laos. Ancient Buddhism and a 25-year-old communist regime are the two power structures of the Southeast Asian nation, and both oppose Christianity, which has been spreading in the countryside. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Tanzania: mission field

4

Directions

5

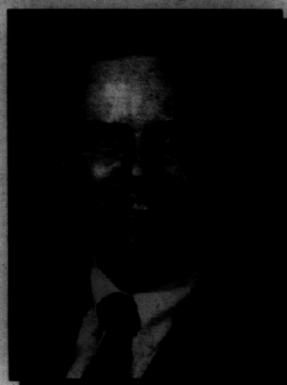
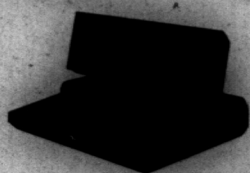
Letters to the editor

9

Sunday School lessons

10

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Your right to vote

November 7 will be an important day in the history of our Republic, for it is on that day that we will undergo the quadrennial process to select someone to occupy the highest office in the land for the next four years — and quite possibly for the next eight years.

In addition, all 435 members of the U.S. Congress and one-third of the members of the U.S. Senate are being elected on that same fateful day.

All such elections are worthy of our most serious consideration, but this election seems more crucial than most.

Hanging in the balance could well be our Christian way of life — literally.

Don't scoff. In a country where the Boy Scouts is now considered a hate group and quoting what the Bible clearly states about homosexuality can lead to withering personal attacks, it's not outlandish to consider what could happen over the next four (possibly eight) years.

As many as four members of the U.S. Supreme Court may be poised to retire over the next four to eight years. Seeing as how most High Court decisions concerning religious and moral matters are now split 5-4, it's chilling to contemplate what even one inappropriate

appointment to the court could do to our rights to practice our faith as we see fit and teach our children Christian morals.

As a pair of letter writers aptly point out on page nine of this issue, we have an obligation to be involved in the governance of our country.

For several decades now, Christians have been relegated to the back bench when it comes to such matters. When we raise our voices in protest, we are labeled as zealots, nuts, sociopaths, and hate mongers.

With a few notable exceptions, most of the celluloid sewage that spews from Hollywood characterizes us as all of the above and more — calculating, diabolical, self-serving, evil.

Name it, and we get tagged with it.

Many Christians are intimidated to the point that they seem only too happy to dodge the cruel spotlight of ridicule as it sweeps our ranks and settles in on its victims.

It is as if Christians don't understand that we are part of what could be the largest and most influential voting bloc in American history.

Southern Baptists alone hold millions of votes. When coupled with other Christian organizations, the magnitude of our potential influence is practically immeasurable.

Politicians are quick to listen to groups of people with enough votes to affect their future job security.

That's why unborn children have no rights — they can't vote. If they could, there's no doubt that the current abortion debate in the country would be moot.

Christians need to get out and vote, in a well-informed and intelligent way that brings honor to our faith.

However, we must be on constant guard against fakirs who would manipulate our considerable voting strength to accomplish their own selfish goals and thus diminish our witness to an unbelieving world.

We must take our right to vote as seriously as the original Framers took their right to vote. We must educate ourselves as to the best candidates.

One vote can make a difference. John F. Kennedy won the 1960 presidential race against Richard Nixon by less than one vote for every precinct in the country.

In 1868, U.S. President Andrew Johnson avoided impeachment and removal from office by only one vote.

"WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH, FOLKS.
WOULD YOU PREFER TO SIT WITH
THE DEMOCRATS? REPUBLICANS?
REFORM? INDEPENDENTS?"



It is not the responsibility of The Baptist Record or your pastor or anyone else to make the decision for whom you will vote.

Listen to the candidates. Educate yourself so you can discern whether they're telling the truth about a particular issue.

When you're sure you have all the facts, confront candidates about issues that affect your faith and your family. If they want your vote, the least they can do is listen to you.

Lastly but certainly most importantly, seek God's guidance through prayer.

Vote on November 7. Like so many previous elections over the years, more is at stake than we probably know.

GUEST OPINION:

What I learned at summer camp

By Pat Thorn, member
Trinity Church, Fulton



As our time on earth grows short, it seems logical that God would cram as many lessons into one experience as possible. Based on my experience this summer as children's summer camp director for our church, I'd say my time is very short.

I planned for eight months. I had a spreadsheet for each day, some broken down into hours. I planned schedules, meals, games, lessons, devotions, and songs. I recruited wonderful people from our church and from Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, to add freshness to our camp.

I trained my counselors with overhead transparencies and demonstrated crafts. I had adults praying for the camp, and for the individual campers and counselors.

Months before camp, I began to pray for flexibility, wisdom, creativity, and humor. I prayed that the counselors would experience God and bond one with another through their love of the Lord.

I was ready. I mean, I was really ready. I was able to sleep at night and put away the antacid bottle.

Well, God stepped in and camp turned out to be a learning session for me. On our four-day/three-night camp, I went to the depths of depression and frustration. God brought me to my knees and then took me by the hand and helped me back up.

Our first day at camp went alright — not great, but we were just getting into the swing of things. The second day was great!

I was so proud of my schedules and my counselors.

Actually, I was proud of me. That was a big mistake.

One of the counselors had to leave for personal reasons. We found lice on a brother and sister; surely other children had lice by now.

The whole camp could be

infected. Even the adults might have lice! Would we have to cancel camp and return home?

The counselors gathered to debate the situation. Finally we stood in a circle, holding hands and weeping as we prayed for our camp.

Does God answer prayer? Yes, he does; my earlier prayer that the counselors would bond was answered on that day.

We did a head check the next morning and found lice on eight more children. We devised a plan to treat the entire camp, including sleeping bags, combs, "scrungies," pillows, and vehicles.

As I tore up my carefully-made schedules, I discovered God answering another prayer request — I could be flexible.

Throughout the day we treated children, counselors, and equipment.

The treated and the untreated had to be kept separate, so we basically ran two camps with fewer counselors.

We reevaluated hour by hour, as the sizes of the two groups shifted.

I found a deep, desperate reliance on God — and he did not fail me. Laughter and singing could be heard all over the campground.

The counselors (including myself) came to find joy and love in every moment.

Bible stories were taught and games were played. Camp was great!

The children learned of God's love and power. I learned not to get too set on my plans, but to trust God for his plans.

I learned to be flexible, wise, creative, and to have a sense of humor.

In other words, God answered all my prayers — in abundance!

Thorn, a homemaker, is active in both the children's and drama ministries of her church.

Turkey to be focus of international study

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Things change; things stay the same. Perhaps there is no country where this is more true than modern-day Turkey. Contrasts in culture, government and religion during the past two centuries are readily apparent in this country which is the focus of "Dispelling the Darkness in Turkey," the 2000 International Mission Study (IMS), published by Woman's Mission-ary Union (WMU).

IMS is a part of the International Missions Emphasis, set for Dec. 3-10. WMU published the material in cooperation with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB). The emphasis also includes the Week of Prayer for International Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

IMS is designed to be a church-wide event with study material available for adults, teens, children, and preschoolers. Students of all ages will learn about the history of Christianity in Turkey; the rise of Islam, with a description of its beliefs; and the modern culture and religious climate of the country.

Emphasis will also be placed on how Christians in the United States can be directly involved in missions in Turkey through individual and corporate prayer; strategic partnerships; and unique ministries such as Pen Friends who write gospel letters each month to Turkish families.

Mary Lou Serratt of Beeville, Texas, wrote the adult study book, *Dispelling the Darkness in Turkey*, and the study guide to accompany it. Serratt, a

member of First Church, Beeville, and wife of Delbert Serratt, director of missions for the Blanco Association, outlines the country's history, geography, culture, people, and Southern Baptist efforts in the country today.

religion and religious freedom is a constitutional guarantee, Islam is the predominant religion in the nation today. Muslims constitute 99.5% of the country's religious affiliation, with Christians and Jews claiming only 0.2% of the population.

How could an area boasting such strong early Christians in the time of Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark possibly evolve into a country where Christians now comprise such a minority? The answer spans centuries and many cultural changes, beginning primarily with the overthrow of the government in 1071 by the Seljuks, a Muslim people from Central Asia, Serratt writes.

The Crusades waged by Christians in Western Europe left a trail of death and destruction and a negative image of Christians that still prevails today, she explains. During the Ottoman reign, beginning in the 1300s, Christians were at least treated well as a minority religion, but in the late 1800s a dictatorship was established by Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, and religious persecution became common.

Many Turkish Christians died for their beliefs.

For much of the 20th century, Serratt notes, unrest was prevalent through government overthrows, terrorist acts by radical groups, bombings, and kidnappings. Battles with Kurdish rebels began in the 1980s.

Today, however, Turkey has a republican parliamentary democracy. The current constitution, adopted in 1982, has ushered in improvements in many areas including free elections and religious freedom.

All this history of turmoil contrasts drastically with the general characteristics of the Turkish people. Serratt describes them as sensitive, contemplative, courteous, hos-

pitable, and proud of their nation and heritage.

Parental respect is highly valued, and gender roles are traditional, she explains. The oldest male is the authority figure for the family, and women are responsible for homemaking and child care. Friendships are strong, and it is not at all unusual to see two men rush to greet one another with an embrace.

The contrast between the past and present is clearly seen in the people. For example, many women still wear the modest, traditional long skirts and long-sleeved blouses, while others work as teachers, industrial laborers, and journalists.

It is not unusual to see a woman riding in a luxurious automobile on the same street with a woman riding in a horse-drawn cart.

2000 International Mission Study for Adults

Dispelling the Darkness in Turkey

Mary Lou Serratt

Present-day Turkey includes the territory of Paul's three missionary journeys almost 2,000 years ago. He and other believers planted churches and witnessed the conversion to Christianity of thousands of citizens in cities such as Ephesus and Antioch.

The seven churches named in the New Testament Book of Revelation were in the area we know as Turkey.

While Turkey has no state

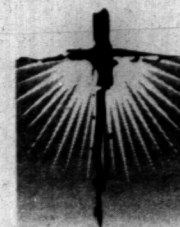
Burkett, Crown to merge

GAINESVILLE, Ga. (BP) — Larry Burkett, founder of Christian Financial Concepts and host of the national "Money Matters" radio program, has announced that Christian Financial Concepts has merged with Crown Ministries.

Burkett, a Southern Baptist layman, is the author of two resources published by church stewardship services at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. *How Much Is Enough?* 30 Days to Personal Revival, and *Jesus on Money* were produced with writer Kay Moore. LifeWay's church stewardship services also has available several other resources produced by Burkett through Christian Financial Concepts.

Since 1976, Christian Financial Concepts, based in Gainesville, Ga., has focused on teaching biblical financial principles through broadcast media, seminars, resource materials, and volunteer budget counselors. Crown Ministries, begun by Dayton in 1985 and based in Orlando, Fla., utilizes small-group studies in thousands of churches around the country that provide practical, biblical training in financial stewardship.

With combined strengths and resources, Crown Financial Ministries, to be based in Gainesville, Ga., is planning an expansion program that will include a new urban initiative, a collegiate initiative, a children/youth initiative and international programs that will help churches around the world become financially self-sufficient.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

Record

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Looking back

10 years ago

While preaching a revival in Japan as part of a 40-team Southern Baptist Crusade effort, First Church, Quitman, pastor Rex Yancey invites members of two Japanese churches to visit him in America. Six members of those churches take him up on his offer, marveling at all the "open land" across Mississippi.

20 years ago

At ground breaking ceremonies for a new sanctuary at Bunker Hill Church, Marion Association, Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Vernon Broom reminds attendees of the "four houses in a Christian democracy — the dwelling house, the school house, the court house, and the church house."

50 years ago

Mississippi native Finley W. Tinnin announces his retirement after 30 years at the helm of the Louisiana Baptist Message, the official news journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. During 25 of those years, he pastored Keatchie Church, Shreveport.

Mission field clear to Baptists in Tanzania

MOROGORO, Tanzania (BP) — When Charles and Carolyn Dixon look out their kitchen window, they don't simply see the beautiful, rugged Uluguru Mountains; they see their mission field — literally.



PROGRESS UPDATE — Charles Dixon (right), a Southern Baptist missionary to Tanzania, updates Kentucky Baptist partnership missions director Calvin Wilkins about progress on construction of a Christian primary school in Morogoro, Tanzania. (BP photo by Trennis Henderson)

first few years of ministry in the city of half a million people. In recent months, however, they have turned much of their attention toward the Luguru people who populate the mountain villages.

"God began to give us a sense of the people up and down this mountain," Charles Dixon explained. "You can drive 20 kilometers and there's not a church, not a mosque, not a secondary school — there's nothing."

"We have really prayed and tried to know what God would have us do," he added. "The work is far bigger than we are."

Carolyn Dixon said villagers on one side of the mountain primarily are Catholic and those on the other side predominantly are Muslim.

She said many of the Luguru people "have continued in their old ways — there's lots of witchcraft. Sometimes people use money they need for food to buy charms for their kids to protect them from evil or heal them."

Seeking to respond to the region's tremendous spiritual needs, Mrs. Dixon said she and her husband "have been through about 30 villages. There are others you can get to only on foot."

Despite the obvious challenges of the work, it isn't hard for the Dixons to find ample motivation for their efforts. Among the places they have visited so far, "two villages did not have a Bible," Mrs. Dixon noted. "There are people who have never heard the name of Jesus; they don't know who he is."

"If we can start teaching the Bible and get a few strong believers in a few places," she added, "they can go out" and help multiply the couple's ministry impact.

"We feel like one of the biggest problems here is lack of education. We've tried to help our pastors get better education to teach their people," Dixon said.

An outgrowth of that need is Dixon's dream of starting a Baptist primary school to provide area youngsters with a quality education in a Christian environment.

For now, he has acquired property for the school and workers almost have completed the exterior walls of the four-room block building. The next major project is adding a roof.

"People are going to recognize us as people who care about their personal needs and families. I see it opening doors," he explained. "When these young people come out of this school, they're going to take with them the training we have given them. They're going to have a soft spot for Baptists."

The Dixons already have requested the International Mission Board to appoint a school administrator and a kindergarten teacher/trainer, with the goal of opening the school by 2002. They also have requested a student worker to serve area high school and college students and an International Service Corps couple to staff a Baptist reading center and teach English as a second language.

Once the school is operational and more missionaries are on the field, Dixon looks forward to focusing the bulk of his energy on church planting among the Luguru and other people groups. In the meantime, he said, "I'm trying to wait on God and see which way He is going to lead."

After serving six years in Tanzania, Dixon noted, "My biggest blessing is just seeing the hunger the people have for understanding and knowing about God. It just thrills my heart."

"I've never doubted that God called me but I ask why," he added. "I feel like I'm still inadequate. The job is so huge."

Amid the challenges of life and ministry in Morogoro, Dixon affirmed, "This is where God has called us to work. This is where we want to be working."

BWA leaders call for prayer

WASHINGTON (BP) — The current Middle East turmoil has prompted the two top leaders of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) to issue a call to prayer. In a joint statement, BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz and President Billy Kim of Seoul, South Korea, issued the following statement, in part:

"At the close of the first year of the millennium, instead of peace we have war. Whereas the beginning of the 20th century was one of optimism and hope for a Christian Century, the 21st century has begun with pessimism and hopelessness. Racial conflict, ethnic cleansing, and now the sounds of war in the Middle East remind us of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem. Jesus' cry, 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace' is the universal cry of men and women worldwide. In the face of the terrible slaughter of innocent people, on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we as Baptists must be peacemakers."

The city of Morogoro, located about 120 miles west of Dar es Salaam, is tucked into the foothills of Tanzania's Uluguru mountain range. Dozens of villages dot the nearby mountains.

The Dixons, who spent most of their lives in Western Kentucky, were appointed as Southern Baptist career missionaries in 1993. They began their work in Morogoro the following year, helping start several churches and preaching points during their

Baptist hospital in Tanzania healing the sick, souls

KIGOMA, Tanzania (BP) — Whether she's diagnosing a case of malaria, performing surgery on a gunshot victim, or playing her violin in a hospital chapel service, Susan Smith is determined to be an active witness for Christ.

As a missionary physician in Kigoma, Tanzania, Smith is the mission team leader for missionaries serving at the 35-bed Kigoma Baptist Hospital. A native of Russellville, Ky., and a former military surgeon, she has been working in Tanzania since 1995.

"When I was in third grade, I started thinking in this direction. I felt like the Lord wanted me to come to the mission field," she recalled.

Fulfilling that call as an adult, Smith noted, "What I love most in the world is to help people get well and be able to tell them it's because Jesus loves them and they can have eternal life."

Beyond that, Smith and the rest of the staff never know what a "typical" day might bring at Kigoma Baptist Hospital.

"I didn't realize how much she was doing with so little," said Glenn Ruppert, a recent Kentucky Baptist medical mission team volunteer. "She's accomplishing miracles with what she has to work with."

Smith said the goal of the hospital is eventually to be self-supporting but that is a challenging task in a remote, heavily Muslim region of one of Africa's poorest nations.

In the meantime, Southern Baptist medical missionaries are determined to provide "the best possible care for the lowest possible cost."

"The people here are dirt poor," Smith noted. "A lot of times they don't have

money so that's why they're here. We try to let them pay what they can pay."

Smith said the hospital's reputation as a



KIGOMA BAPTIST HOSPITAL — Southern Baptist missionary surgeon Susan Smith (center) performs surgery on a patient's injured foot at Kigoma Baptist Hospital in Tanzania. (BP by Trennis Henderson)

quality medical facility gives staff members the opportunity "to get people to listen to us about medical care and nutrition and how to follow Jesus."

The hospital admits about 100-120 patients a month and provides outpatient care for up to 1,400 people a month through the hospital clinic.

Among the hospital's ongoing ministry efforts are chapel services held each day in the clinic waiting area as dozens of Muslims wait to receive medical care.

The hospital chaplain also shows Swahili versions of the "Jesus" video and other Christian programs throughout the day.

"We gain a hearing for the gospel by the way we treat our patients here," Smith explained. "The people are really open here. The African Muslims do not get insulted if you talk to them about Jesus because they accept that you love them."

"You can gain an entry into their hearts by talking about Jesus as the Great Physician."

Smith said the hospital averages about one or two Christian conversions a week as staff members share with patients one-on-one. "When the assistant chaplain comes to me on the ward and says, 'I've just talked with a Muslim woman who accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior,' that makes me feel like, 'Yes, we're accomplishing something.'"

Even amid the spiritual victories, Smith acknowledged that Kigoma is a difficult ministry setting. "Sometimes I wish things would go smoother on the ward or that we wouldn't have a shortage of supplies," she said. In the States, "you never think about whether you're going to have electricity or not. Here, life goes on."

I am always intrigued when I see solutions to problems that are worse than the problems themselves!

On an October day at a New Orleans hospital it was reported that a fire had broken out. A large number of patients, and many of those who cared for them, were affected. They were able to get the fire out without any serious injuries.

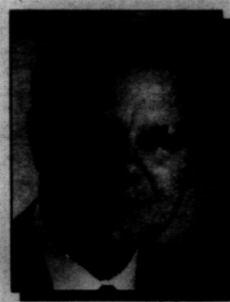
The fire was traced back to a patient who had been hooked up to an IV. The man had been extremely uncomfortable, so in order to get relief from the IV, he just stuck a fire to it. The little plastic IV tube quickly caught fire, then other things soon caught fire, and then a hospital was on fire! It was not a good solution to the problem!

Now more than likely that patient was uncomfortable and it is entirely possible that he needed to get relief — still, it was not the wisest decision in the world to set fire to the IV hose! I sincerely doubt that he will do that again! In order to just change his circumstances and relieve his own personal discomfort, he endangered himself, other patients, nurses, doctors, and could have destroyed the hospital. The solution to the problem was far worse than the problem itself.

While I have never heard of anyone else doing such a thing, and while I don't believe I would have tried it, even if I had thought of it, we all participate in implementing solutions to our problems that are sometimes worse than our problems.

Maybe you have not tried to burn your IV tube resulting in almost destroying a hospital, but you can probably think of areas in your own life where you have done similar, not-so-smart things.

I have known of folks who have dropped out of church because of some disagreement



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

over what was actually an insignificant matter. They were angry because they didn't get their way, or perturbed about some decision.

They drop out with little or no awareness of the consequences of how many others are affected. People who love and appreciate them and maybe had a great deal of confidence in them, are disappointed in the way they act. Their own children are kept away from the opportunities and influences of the Lord's church. Other good, positive, and God-glorifying things that are taking place are ignored as they make the decision to burn the IV hose.

These days it is not uncommon to see families coming up with solutions to their problems that are much worse than the problems. Sometimes husbands and wives have dis-

agreements over things which, even when examined by them, are rather trivial and still they decide to destroy their relationship. It is called divorce.

There seems to be no thought for the other family members that would be involved, especially the children. They seem determined to find their own comfort from the IV hose, so they light the fire and it affects friends, family members, and even like the guy in the hospital, those people who are trying to help them.

On a national scale, and at the same time in a very personal and practical way, you can see faultless solutions as people turn to alcohol and drugs to soothe over the situations in life. Young people, professional folks, poverty stricken people — all attempting to answer the appeal that comes

to take this or drink that and your mood or mind will be altered.

The problem is not solved and neither does it go away, but some chemical provides what appears to be a shelter from the calamities of life. Yet, in time they discover that what looked like a safe haven was actually a prison. It is a solution to a problem that is indeed worse than the problem.

It might do all of us good to stop and think about the solutions we are working on to solve whatever problem we may be looking at whether it is related to church, convention, business, or burdens.

Some years ago a friend of mine was out on a lake fishing. Suddenly he noticed there was a large snake curled up in his boat. Since he generally carried a pistol with him, his immediate and all-too-quick reaction was to kill the snake with his gun. A few quick, well aimed shots and the snake was dead!

Now, already, you can see the picture. He was in a heap of trouble. The bullets killed the snake, but they didn't stop there. You see, my friend was faced with trying to get back to shore before his boat sank.

Some solutions are indeed worse than the problem.

Founding SBC church severs ties

SAVANNAH, Ga. (ABP) — A founding church of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) voted Oct. 15 to sever ties with the denomination, citing doctrinal differences.

First Church of Savannah, Ga., voted by a 93% margin to end its 155-year relationship with Southern Baptists. A resolution cited differences over pastoral authority, autonomy of the local church, the priesthood of all believers, and "orthodoxy" as a requirement for full participation in denominational life.

The church was established in 1800. Its second pastor, William Bullein Johnson, is often described as the "father of the Southern Baptist Convention."

While some historians say that is an overstatement, all acknowledge that he was a major architect of the convention, which organized in 1845. He wrote the first constitution and was its first president and most important spokesman.

"In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the directions and goals of the Southern Baptist Convention have diverged from those envisioned by its founding fathers and from those of the members of First Baptist Church," according to the church resolution.

While the 600-member church has not contributed financially or sent messengers to the SBC for 10 years, it has continued to identify itself as a Southern Baptist church "even if in name only," Senior Minister John Finley said, but eventually it became an issue of "integrity and honesty."

Acteens to crosswalk through state

At the Mississippi Acteens Convention in March 2000, Acteens kicked off a statewide ministry project called Crosswalk.

Crosswalk is a yearlong project that involves moving an actual six-foot cross throughout the state, from one Acteens group or youth group to another while conducting ministry projects.

Every week during the year a different group has the cross, during which they participate in one or more ministry projects in their community. At the end of the week the cross is handed off to another Acteens group.

The purpose is to provide opportunities for local Acteen

groups to model what they think Jesus would do if he were to visit their community.

Crosswalk began in the northeast corner of Mississippi and is making its way to the coast.



ACCEPTING THE CROSS — Acteens from First Church, Jackson, stand with cross outside the gates of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds. They are (from left) Marguerite Williams, Angela Crawley, Tiffany Westerfield, and Lindsay Ann Anderson.

During the week of the Mississippi State Fair, Acteens from First Church, Jackson, carried the cross from the Baptist Building to the fairgrounds.

At the fair they made and gave out salvation bracelets and cups of cold water as they witnessed to visitors.

For more information on Crosswalk, contact the Mississippi WMU Department at (601) 292-3316 or toll free (800) 748-1651, ext. 316.

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY. Good computer skills. Please submit resume to Morrison Heights Baptist Church, ATTN: Richard Collum, 201 Morrison Drive, Clinton, MS 39056. Phone (601) 924-5620; fax (601) 924-5622.

PART-TIME (BI-VOCATIONAL) MINISTER OF MUSIC. Housing available. Thirty minutes from Memphis. Send resume to Slayden Baptist Church, 2534 Highway 72, Lamar, MS 38642 or call (662) 252-4559 or (662) 252-4520. Fax: (662) 252-5248. E-mail: sbchurch@dixie-net.com.

SEEKING FULL-TIME YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTER for FBC Raleigh. Resumes may be faxed to (601) 782-9124, e-mailed to oln@megagate.com, or mailed to FBC Raleigh, P.O. Box 249, Raleigh, MS 39153. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Rev. O. Lyn Nations at (601) 782-4580 or (601) 782-9231.

PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR. Send resume to Trinity Baptist Church, 2610 Napoleon Avenue, Pearl, MS 39208.

NEW PROSPECT BAPTIST CHURCH of luka, is now accepting resumes for full-time pastor. Send resume to 2197 Hwy. 25 South, luka, MS 38852.

YOUTH MINISTER POSITION AVAILABLE at Perkinston Baptist Church in the Gulf Coast Association. Please contact the church at (601) 928-7532, or send resume to P.O. Box 263, Perkinston, MS 39573.

FULL-TIME PASTOR NEEDED FOR Bay Vista Baptist Church. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 2485 Pass Road, Biloxi, MS 39531.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC needed for First Baptist Church of Byram. This is a fast growing area. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Byram, 7541 Siwell Road, Jackson, MS 39212.

FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY CENTER DIRECTOR. Please submit resume and references to Business Administrator, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 400, Madison, MS 39130-0400 or fax (601) 856-6177 or e-mail gholder@fbcmadison.org.

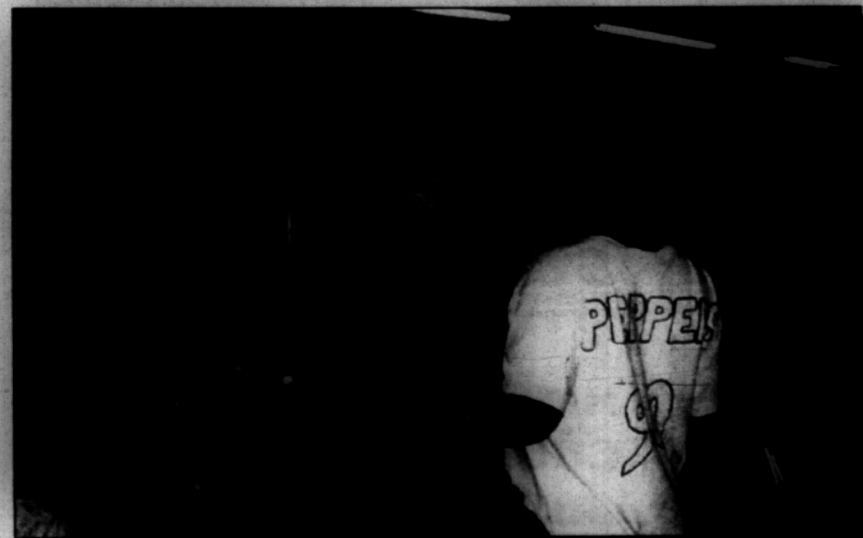
PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC, PART-TIME PIANIST. Send resume, references, and picture to: Music Search Committee, Kilmichael Baptist Church, P.O. Box 142, Kilmichael, MS 39747. request application (662) 262-5507. Fax resume (662) 262-5570.



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Jim is an ordained Baptist minister and evangelist as well as an award-winning magician and comic. He has performed in hundreds of churches in America and on the foreign mission field. Jim has programs for all types of events and for groups of all ages: Banquets, Outreach, VBS, Camps. Call 1-800-960-7631 or visit us at: jimchester.com/jcministries Jim Chester Ministries, Slidell, LA



SHARING CHRIST — Tiffany Westerfield (left), a member of First Church, Jackson, shares a salvation bracelet during the Mississippi State Fair. (BR special photos)



—NOVEMBER 2, 2000

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 2, 2000

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.

We can help you raise money
for your building program!

Challenge to Build has a 30-year history of assisting Mississippi Baptist churches to reach a new level of giving, and has raised \$32,308,346 from 1990-2000.

Your church **CAN** reach its goal:

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- Family Life Center
- Educational Buildings
- Other Projects

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Stewardship Department
Contact Jerry Mixon, Stewardship
Director, 601-292-3347 or
1-800-748-1651 ext. 347

**Challenge
to Build**

THE SUIT PROJECT



DON'T FORGET

What is it?

For over 36 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work.

What can you do?

Men's Ministries groups, individuals, churches, etc., can send their gifts payable to:
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Attention: Men's Ministry Department
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Cost: \$130 per suit
Designate on your check:
Suit Project



Mississippi Baptists say
"Merry Christmas" to pastors
in the Maryland/Delaware
and the Utah - Idaho
Conventions

Sponsored by the
Men's Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus"

YOUNG MUSICIANS' FESTIVAL NEWS FLASH!!!



Guest Conductor:
Steve Roddy

March 31, 2001
Mississippi College Coliseum
8:15 a.m. - 1 p.m.

In Concert



Hillcrest BC, Jackson

November 12, 2000

6:30 p.m.

Stepping Out

Acteens Pizzazz Weekend

Camp Garaywa

November 10-11, 2000

Friday, 5:30 p.m. - Saturday, 2:00 p.m.

**MissionsQuest, Acteens Activators,
CrossWalk, Music, Missionary
Moments, and MORE!**

Church/Association _____

Contact Person _____

Phone _____

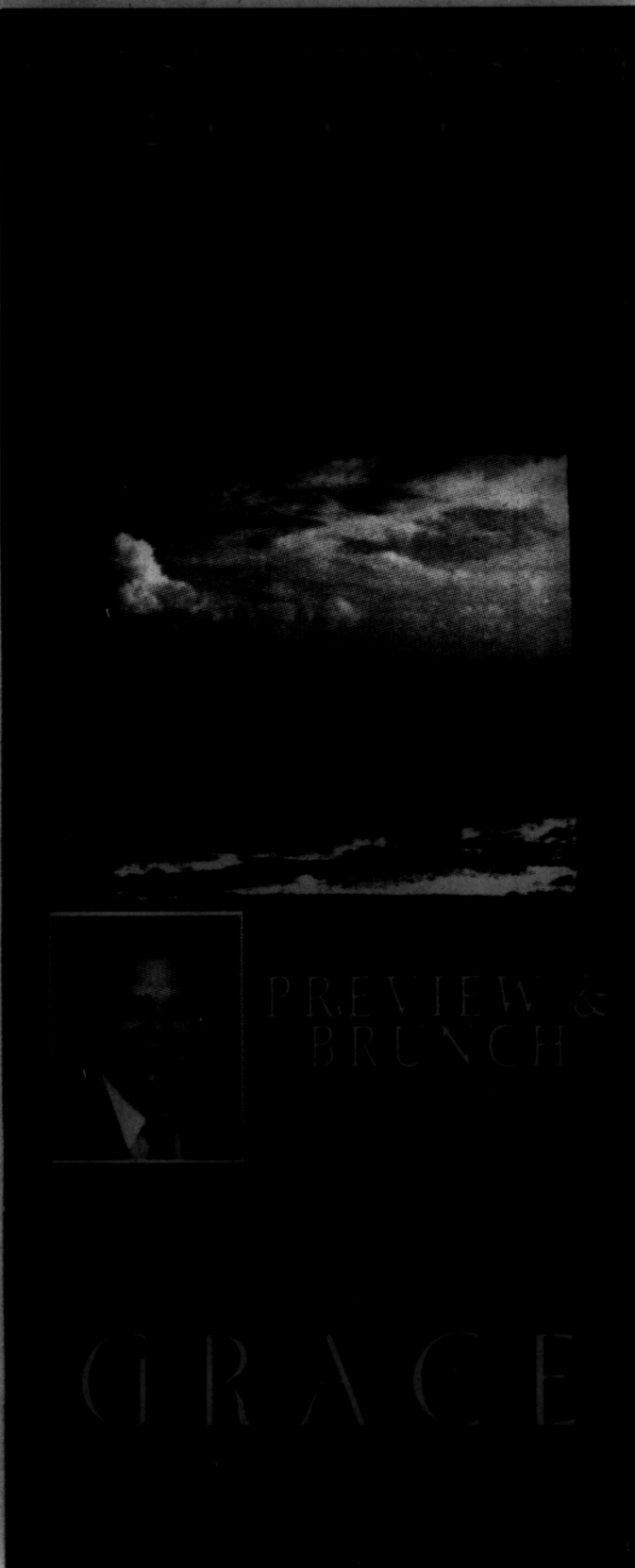
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Number of people x \$32.50
(per person) = \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board (MBCB). Send registration
form and check to:

**WMU Department
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205-0530**



Registration Form

Amazing Grace Preview

Name _____
(Group leader, if a group)

Church _____

Association _____

Address _____

\$5 x no. of persons = \$ _____ (total amount)

Circle choice of Preview location

• Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo
January 29, 2001

• First Baptist Church, Clinton
January 30, 2001

• First Baptist Church, Biloxi
February 1, 2001

Others registering with you
(Name) _____ (Church) _____

Make all checks payable to
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department

Complete this form and return to:
Don Hicks, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530.

Make your plans now!

Attend a preview of the 2001 Baptist Doctrine Study at one of the following locations:

• Calvary Baptist
Church, Tupelo
January 29, 2001

• First Baptist
Church, Clinton
January 30, 2001

• First Baptist
Church, Biloxi
February 1, 2001

• Free copies of *Amazing Grace:
God's Initiative—Our Response*
by Timothy George will be
given to all who pre-register.

• Free Leaders Guide will be
given to anyone who registers
and brings three or more.

• Cost: \$5 per person

**All
previews are from
9 a.m.-noon**

Youth Ministers Workshop 2000

Lake Tiak O'Khata

Louisville

November 13-15



Finances

The charge for lodging and meals is the only cost for this conference. **Payment is to be made to Lake Tiak O' Khata and not to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.** All prices include tax and gratuity.

The motel group plan for this workshop includes two (2) nights' lodging and five (5) meals. The five meals are Monday (dinner), Tuesday (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and Wednesday (breakfast).

Motel group plan per person is:

- \$146.25 for single occupancy
- \$ 98.15 for double occupancy
- \$ 81.35 for triple occupancy
- \$ 72.95 for quad occupancy

One night's lodging and three (3) meals plan per person cost is:

- \$ 76.75 for single occupancy
- \$ 52.70 for double occupancy
- \$ 44.30 for triple occupancy
- \$ 40.10 for quad occupancy

Reservations

For motel lodging reservations, please call Lake Tiak O'Khata at (662) 773-7853, toll free at (888) 845-6151 or fax at (662) 773-4555. Their mailing address is P.O. Box 160, Smyth Road, Louisville, MS 39339. A block of rooms is being held for this conference until October 30 (two weeks before the first day of the workshop). At that time all rooms on hold will be released. Each room must be individually reserved and guaranteed with a deposit by this date. Cancellation policy is one week prior to arrival date. Please clip and return the registration form at right to Matt Buckles, CAPM Dept., P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205 or fax to Matt at (601) 714-7426 or E-mail your registration to Matt at mbuckles@mbcb.org. **Remember: Lodging reservations must be with Lake Tiak O'Khata.**

Preschool Childcare

Preschool childcare will be provided at First Baptist Church, Louisville, at no additional cost.

Registration Form

Youth Ministers Workshop, November 13-15, 2000

Lake Tiak O'Khata

Name _____ Church Position _____

Spouse's Name (if attending) _____ Number and Age of Preschoolers (if attending) _____

Church Name _____ Association Name _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Office Phone _____ Home Phone _____ E-mail: _____

☐ I have made lodging reservations at Lake Tiak O'Khata.

☐ I do not need a room, but will plan to eat the following meals there:

- ☐ Monday dinner ☐ Tuesday breakfast ☐ Tuesday lunch
- ☐ Tuesday dinner ☐ Wednesday breakfast

☐ I plan to play in the Golf Tournament on Tuesday afternoon (Harvey Ellis - MBCB is the contact)

Please clip and return to Matt Buckles, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530.

2000

MISSISSIPPI YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

I Believe

A.E. WOOD COLISEUM

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE, CLINTON

DECEMBER 28-29, 2000



I Believe
One Can Make A
Difference



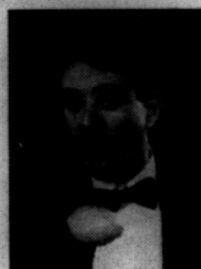
Gary Permenter
Speaker



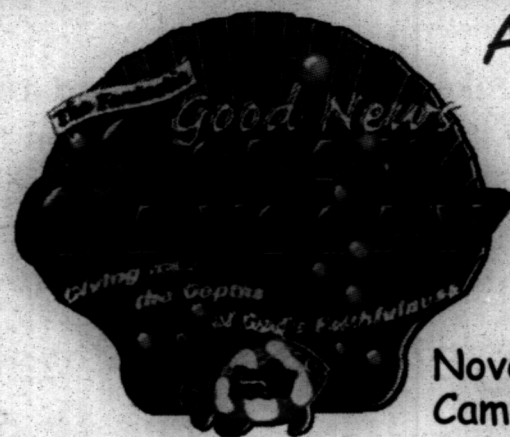
Ken Smith
Speaker



Kevin Williams
Praise and Worship



Matt Fore
Christian Comedian



A Special Education Retreat

November 18-19
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

The retreat is for people 12 years of age, their parents, teachers, friends, and pastors/ministers.

Registration begins 11 a.m. Saturday and the retreat concludes 1 p.m. Sunday.

COST: \$25 PER PERSON

Pre-registration fee of \$5 is due November 15 at the Baptist Building along with a list of people attending.

The balance of \$20 is due on Saturday, November 18.

One adult counselor for every five campers of the same sex is required.

For more information, contact:

Mark Lott, MBCB

PO 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530

601-292-3295 or toll-free outside Jackson 1-800-748-1651.

Pray this day for...

November 3 - November 16, 2000

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

MEDITATION IN PRAYER - The act of reflecting on God's Word and quietly listening for His still small voice. "Prayer is a relationship far more than a mere ritual or discipline."

"How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life" by Gregory R. Frizzell

For (1) Voter Awareness Day (CAC Emphasis) (2) A Chuabo man of Mozambique was ordained as a pastor Oct. 1. Pray that God will bless him and his family as they serve God in their church and in his workplace.

Pray for Jennifer Turner, a weekday ministries director in Richmond, Va., for Jesse, who made a profession of faith this past year and is now in the army, and for 20 teenagers who recently made professions of faith and those discipling them.

For (1) Baptist Building STAFF PLANNING WEEK (2) Guillermo Ramos, a church planter missionary in Fallon, Nev., recently had a painful procedure on his back. Pray for the need for more Hispanic pastors in that area.

For (1) Strength Under Stress Conference (CMR&A) (2) Youth Ministers Workshop, CAPM.)

13

In April, God healed an 11-year-old boy after a bicycle accident in south Bolivia. In July, he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Pray his parents will also recognize their need for a personal relationship with God.

Pray for the evangelization of Spanish-speaking people in the provinces that border Haiti. They are very open to Bible studies; however, making a decision for Christ is often difficult due to family ties and reluctance to change their lifestyles.

Pray for Swazi pastors studying theological education by extension in Swaziland and South Africa. Pray that God will use these pastors to reach the Swazis in Swaziland and the Mpumalanga region of South Africa.

Give thanks to God for the group of college students who prayer-walked and worked in the Guarayo area of Bolivia two weeks during the summer. Pray for the two Guarayo teenagers who accepted Christ during that time.

Pray for six employees of a financial institution in Colombia who are meeting to pray for the salvation of their fellow employees. Pray that the Holy Spirit will work through these faithful six to reach others.

Pray for a theological training session Nov. 19-24 in Sri Lanka. The itinerant team leading this session asks you to pray "that the right people will attend. Pray they will hear the Father and seek to live and proclaim the truths they will learn!"

For (1) International Student Conference (Collegiate Ministry) (2) Please pray for Indonesia's president, Abdurrahman Wahid who has the power to stop the persecution of Christians in the Maluku Islands and especially in the city of Ambon.

For (1) Acteens Pizzazz (WMU) (2) African American Church Leadership Institute (SID) (3) Partnership Missions Celebration (Partnership Missions)

Missionaries Bruce and Gabby Worley in Guatemala request prayer for the elected president of one community. God is dealing with him and his wife and they could make a strong impact on their community if they surrendered totally to Him.

Pray for the 11 MKs (missionary kids) attending the Mombasa International School in Kenya to stand firm in their faith and to be bright lights for Christ among both teachers and students.

Plan a Celebrate Jesus Weekend

Give Celebrate Jesus more emphasis in your church by planning and conducting a Celebrate Jesus weekend. It will serve to jump-start your church members to focus their energies on evangelism.

Leaders for a Celebrate Jesus weekend are the pastor and four team leaders: prayer, personal witnessing, proclamation and preservation.

Step 1:
Prospect
Discovery

Step 2:
Prayer

Step 3:
Personal
Witnessing
Training

Step 4:
Proclamation

Step 5:
Preservation

Call the Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Department at 601-292-3278 if we can help you celebrate Jesus!

WHO?

A Celebrate Jesus weekend is led by the pastor and four Celebrate Jesus team leaders: prayer, personal witnessing, proclamation and preservation. It is led for the church members.

WHAT?

A Celebrate Jesus weekend is a focused weekend (Friday night through Sunday night) designed to inspire and instruct church members regarding their personal involvement in Celebrate Jesus.

WHEN?

A Celebrate Jesus weekend can be held at any time.

WHERE?

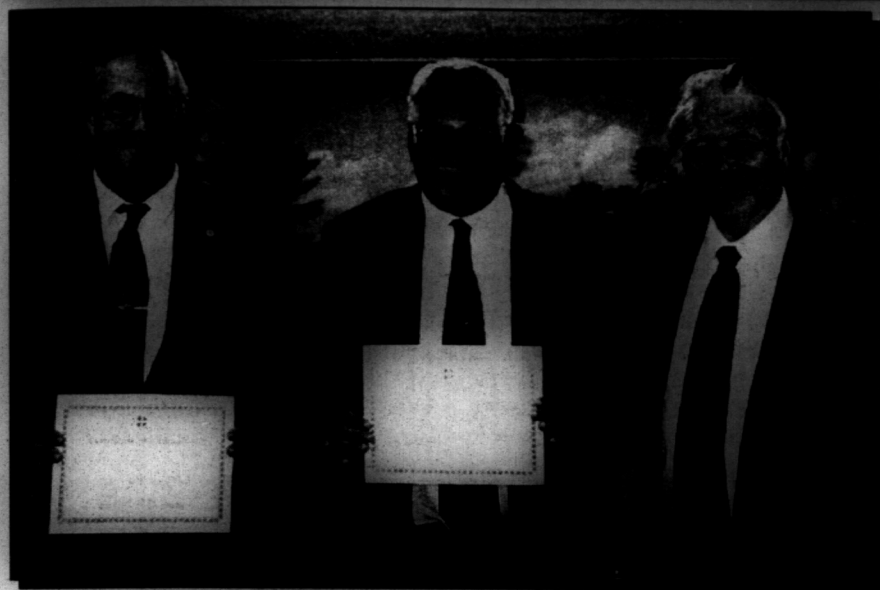
A Celebrate Jesus weekend is usually conducted at the church facility so that the personal witnessing portion of the weekend can focus on the church's community.

WHY?

A Celebrate Jesus weekend sets aside several hours for a church to give focused attention to the church's opportunity and responsibility in Celebrate Jesus. It offers not only evangelistic inspiration but also instruction to participating church members.

HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Jackson, Gray, and Walker



Blythe, Houston, M. Vaughn, Jones, and V. Vaughn

MLSMO goals reached

First Church, Houka, recently held the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering catfish supper and raised \$810 toward the church's goal of \$2,000. David Blackwell is pastor.

Wayside Church, Vicksburg, exceeded its Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering goal by \$200. Larry W. Haggard is pastor.

Faith Church, Oxford, ordained Dickey L. Gray and R. Stacy Jackson to the deacon ministry on Sept. 24. Pictured (from left) are Jackson, Gray, and Gerald H. Walker, pastor.



The Bewleys

Woodville Heights Church, Jackson, ordained Rick Bewley as deacon on Oct. 1. Wayne Kimbrough is pastor. Pictured with Bewley are his wife Sharon and daughter Stacy.

Michael H. Gilreath received the certificate of church music on May 19 from the College of Undergraduate Studies at New Orleans Seminary. He currently serves as minister of music at Bayou View Church, Gulfport.

New Prospect Church, Iuka, ordained Benny Murrah as a deacon on Sept. 17. Jim Manley of Iuka Church conducted the service.



Bethesda Church, Terry, recently ordained James Wilbourn and Jim Moore as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Wilbourn, Moore, and Marty Wilson, pastor.



Members of New Hope Church, Sumrall

Atwood; (second row) Betty Stephens and K. W. Atwood; (third row) Richard Hamilton, pastor; Kelton Ingram; and Hershell Coulter.



Edmond Reid (right) received a pin for 39 years of perfect attendance at Siloam Church, West Point. Pictured with Reid is Ernest Cothran, Sunday School director.

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PO Box 1302 501-316-3100
Benton, AR 72018-1302 Fax 501-316-3110

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since 1944

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Every Life a Promise
November is National Adoption Month

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in Jackson, MS. For more information call (601) 957-2222.

ESL workshops to be held in Miss.

English as a Second Language (ESL) workshops will be held at the following locations:

- Washington Association; Nov. 9-11; Gwen Allen, International Mission Board (IMB), International Service Corps (ISC), Argentina, instructor; Class times: Nov. 9, 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Nov. 10, 6-9:30 p.m.; Nov. 11, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Send name, address, phone number, and \$25 to JoAnn Scott, c/o Kenneth West, P.O. Box 4511, Greenville, MS 38704. Make checks payable to Washington Baptist Association. For more information call (662) 335-2862 or the Mississippi WMU department at (800) 748-1651, ext. 316.

- Bethlehem Church, Jones Association; Nov. 16-18; Gwen Allen, IMB, ISC, Argentina, instructor; Class times: Nov. 16, 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Nov. 17, 6-9:30 p.m.; Nov. 18, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Registration deadline: Nov. 8. Send name, address, phone number, and \$25 to Charles Gordon, 206 South 11th Ave., Laurel, MS 39440. Make checks payable to Jones Baptist Association. For more information call (601) 649-8114 or the Mississippi WMU department at (800) 748-1651, ext. 316.

The \$25 fee covers materials, snacks, and lunch on Saturday. Lodging and all other meals are not provided. All class times must be completed in order to receive ESL certification from the North American Mission Board.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: Nov. 5-8; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bobby Ready, evangelist; Lollie Ready, music; Greg Johnston, pastor.

First, Columbia: Nov. 5-8; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Bo Parker, music; Wayne Vanhorn, pastor.

Bethel, Liberty: Nov. 5-8; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish lunch at noon; and worship, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Shep Johnson, Georgia, evangelist; Neil Wigley, Bethel Church, music.

Spring Hill, Waterford: Nov. 12-17; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; worship, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Jeff Hardy, Tenn., preaching; Ron Norvell, Ripley, music.

Grandview, Pearl: Nov. 5-8; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Porter, director, Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; John Moore, Puckett Church, music; Wade Chappell, pastor.

Lake Como, Bay Springs: Nov. 12-15; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., lunch, and service to follow.

Leesburg, Morton: Nov. 12-15; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Jackson, evangelist; Jeff Jones, music.

New Hope (Oktibbeha): Nov. 5-8; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Terry Partin, evangelist; Terry Veasey, music; Eddie Painter, pastor.

Center Ridge, Yazoo City: Nov. 5-8; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Rick Kennedy, McComb, evangelist; Ken Hedgepeth, Hattiesburg, music; Mike Sutton, pastor.

Eden (Yazoo): Nov. 12-15; Sunday, 10 a.m. followed by covered dish lunch; and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed McDaniel, evangelist; David Westbrook, music; Albert Grey, pastor.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Mississippi College student, Brad McMahan, of Ridgeland,



The Gandys, McMahan, and Courtney

has been awarded the first annual Carpenter-Gandy Scholarship by the Board of Ministerial Education. McMahan is a sophomore, majoring in psychology while preparing for student ministries. The Carpenter-Gandy Scholarship was established earlier this year by Erskine and Fran Gandy for the purpose of providing financial assistance to ministerial students at Baptist colleges. Pictured (from left) are Erskine and Fran Gandy, McMahan, and Ruthie Courtney of the Board of Ministerial Education.

Robert Kingdon, historian, will present the annual R. Glen

Eaves Lecture in European and English History on Nov. 6, at 7 p.m. in the Grand Hall West of the B.C. Rogers Student Center on the campus of Mississippi College (MC). The topic for the evening will be Discipline in Calvin's Geneva. This event is jointly sponsored by the MC History and Political Science Department and the Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society. Kingdon, considered one of the world's foremost experts in Reformation history, earned his A.B. degree from Oberlin College, Phi Beta Kappa, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University. He has taught at the University of Iowa and the University of Wisconsin.

STAFF CHANGES

Trinity Church, Pearl, has called William James of Foxworth as pastor effective Oct. 1. A native of Laurel, James received his education at Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Holly Springs Church.

Wallerville Church, Union County Association, has called Harvey Sewell as pastor effective Oct. 1. Sewell previously served Pine Grove Church, Benton-Tippah Association; Liberty Church, Pontotoc; Pleasant Hill Church, New Albany; and Crowder Church, Crowder.

Joey Williams, a native of Natchez, recently accepted the position of minister of music at Hillcrest Church, Jackson. Williams is a graduate of Mississippi College and is currently pursuing a degree through New Orleans Seminary.

Mt. Vernon Church, Columbus, has called Scott Wilson as associate pastor to students. He previously served at Woodlawn Church, Vicksburg. Wilson is presently working on his master of divinity degree through the extension program of New Orleans Seminary.

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CHRISTIANS MUST VOTE

Editor:

How many elections have been more important than this one? The next president, for example, is to appoint several members to the U.S. Supreme Court. Indeed, this is the year wherein every Christian must vote! Jesus commanded that we be salt and light (Matt 5:13, 14). Voting — taking part in selecting our public officials — is one way to do what our Lord commands.

Paul exercised his Roman citizenship (Acts 16: 35-40) as a factor in advancing the Gospel. Time and again, Scripture and secular history remind us that the direction of the leaders greatly affected the direction of the people.

Comparing the platforms of the two major parties will add light to our voting decisions and can be found at www.erc.com. Can it be anything less than sin if we don't vote?

Harold H. Hendrick
St. Louis, MO

Editor's note: Hendrick is a trustee of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

IMPORTANT ELECTION

Editor:

The election on November 7 will be, in my opinion, the most important election in the history of the nation. In years past, many Christians have voted for candidates who held moral and political views exactly opposite

to their own. It seems that some people use the strange criteria of, "Is the candidate a member of the Southern Baptist Convention?" without regard for his personal moral and political convictions.

Also, some listen for the best speaker, or look for the most handsome or aggressive candidate, or some other senseless characteristic. Some people make up their minds after they go to the polls, or they pray for guidance without learning about the candidates' positions on the issues. Others also disobey God's will by not voting at all.

There is still time to learn about the candidates and their positions on the issues, if one tries hard enough. At this late date one should call a friend of like mind and of conservative political persuasion who has kept up with the candidates. The last thing we should do is take the word of the ultra-liberal press or TV. They can't get it straight even if they try.

Bill Ashley
Jackson

BELIEVE GOD'S ACCOUNT

Editor:

While there have been some good responses to counter the claims of evolution, please consider the following:

Simply put, most evolutionists make no room for God and allow no supernatural involvement in original creation of material matter or of life. This fact is clearly at odds with biblical revolution and authority.

Secondly, God did not need to create all the modern forms of plant and animal life. He only needed to create basic kinds each with vast gene pools with normal sorting and developing capacities. There are variations within kinds but never a crossover between kinds.

The work of Gregor Mendel (who was a creationist) confirms this very thing.

Next, the facts need underscoring that all evidences about origin exist in the present, and man can only examine the present.

Fossils and strata exist in the present. No fossil is discovered with a date tag attached to it.

Furthermore, all modern dating methods are built upon certain assumptions about the initial material content, the "natural" rate of decay, the pristine environment, etc.

Our Lord Jesus Christ believed and taught the original creation account of God's making man and woman: "...from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female" Mark 10:6. There is no need or room for evolution.

I had rather believe the account of God, who was there, then the accounts of men, who were not there.

B. J. Henley
Philadelphia

NIV CLEARER

Editor:

Russell Bradford wrote that we do not have a choice of whether to use the King James Version (KJV) or the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible in our Sunday School literature.

I am sorry but he must be misinformed. The new Explore the Bible Study has both versions in its books and the

Family Bible Study comes in either version.

I thought that I was right because I order the literature for our church, but I checked to be sure.

Personally I find the NIV useful to study along with the KJV. I have used it almost all the time since it was published and have found no misleading information in it.

It makes clearer some of the words that are no longer in use and has been very helpful.

Eva Mae Boutwell
Laurel

NEW PERSPECTIVE

Editor:

I write in response to Mr. Russell Bradford's letter condemning the increasing use of Bible translations other than the King James Version (KJV) of 1611 in Sunday School materials.

I held similar views until I spent time studying the KJV Translator's Dedicatory Epistle (forward) to the KJV.

I discovered that King James asked for a "modern English translation" of the Bible to prevent his English subjects from being influenced by the religious leaders and priests in the Catholic church of England.

By using a Latin version of the Bible, the priests of that day could misinterpret the Holy Scriptures in a way that fit their own personal, political, and religious agendas.

May I suggest that if King James could live today and were given kingly authority once again, he would immediately issue an edict for translators to produce a "modern edition" of the Bible known as the King James Version of 2001 — and, once again, his desire would be for a Bible, "that even the very vulgar (common man) could understand."

Could it be that King James would applaud the New International Version (NIV)?

I would suggest that all KJV-only believers read the full text of the Translator's Dedicatory Epistle.

It will give all Baptists a new perspective on the KJV/NIV controversy.

Robert Lightsey
Laurel



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

An everlasting promise

1 Chronicles 17:1-4, 7, 10b-14, 23-27

By Heather Cumberland

My grandfather is a very special person. He is always willing to help, whether physically or financially, and he never asks for anything in return. When he gives, he gives with no strings attached. Although I try to show my appreciation to him, I will never be able to fully repay him for all that he has done for me.

This is similar to the relationship we have with God. God continually gives to us and blesses us, and out of our love for him we try to repay him. We know, however, that no matter how hard we try, we will never be able to repay God for the many things he does for us.

The first verse of 1 Chronicles 17 says, "Behold, I am dwelling in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under curtains."

David wanted to repay God for all that he had done for him. God had blessed him with a beautiful palace and David wanted to build something equally wonderful for God.

David had set up a tent to house the ark, but in his mind, God deserved something more elaborate. What David did not understand was that God was not interested in the physical appearance of the temple, but in the quality of the sacrifices and devotion to him.

Cumberland

God responded to David's plan by reminding him of all that he had done for him. He brought him out of the pasture to lead his people (v. 7), he protected him from his enemies, and he built a house for him (v. 8). God then proceeded to tell David how he was going to continue to take care of him.

I believe David had the best of intentions when he decided to build a temple for the Lord. In David's mind, God deserved more than just a tent. He did not understand at the time that God was not interested in the outer appearance of where people worshiped him, but whether or not they were truly worshipping with their whole hearts.

I think that many times Christians today do the same thing that David did. They are

more worried about the appearance of the temple (or church) than the quality of the sacrifice (or worship). We build big, beautiful churches, yet often we become pew-warmers. All we do is go to church, listen to the preacher, and leave.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to have a beautiful place in which to worship — and God does deserve the best. We must remember, though, that God is not concerned with what is on the outside, but what is in the heart.

God continued to assure David that he was going to set up one of David's descendants to establish his kingdom. This descendant would build a house for God (v. 11-12).

We have the New Testament to tell us that the descendant that God was speaking of here was Jesus. We also know, by reading the New Testament, that God was not speaking of a

physical house, but a spiritual one that we find in Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus mentions this (spiritual) temple in John 2:19 when he cleared the merchants out of the (physical) temple. He said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Many of the people did not understand that Jesus was talking about his death and resurrection.

This Sunday as you enter into the church building, say a prayer asking the Lord to prepare your spirit for a truly worshipful experience. Appreciate the beautiful building in which you worship the Lord, but do not let that be the focus of your Sunday morning.

Allow God to be the focus of your Sunday morning and you will experience his presence in a mighty way.

Cumberland is advertising coordinator for *The Baptist Record*.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Trusting in God

Acts 12:5-17

By Wayne VanHorn

Trials are the crucible in which our faith in God is tested. Today's lesson focuses on the trial of imprisonment and imminent death that Peter faced shortly after James the son of Zebedee had been martyred ca. A.D. 44.

To appease the Jews, King Herod, also known as Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, began to imprison and kill the apostles. James's martyrdom reminds us of Jesus' words in Mark 10:39.

Pray for God's help (v. 5). While Peter was in prison awaiting his execution at the end of the Feast of Passover-Unleavened Bread, the church was "earnestly praying" (NIV) or praying "without ceasing" (KJV).

Both translations capture the intensity and constancy of the

church's prayer for Peter. During our times of trial, the church must trust God enough to turn to him in earnest and intense prayer.

Look for God's response (vv. 7-9). God responds to prayer, but not every trial will result in deliverance! For example, James the son of Zebedee was not miraculously freed but rather put to death for his faith.

For Peter however, the outcome was quite different. God acted on the very night that preceded Peter's trial. God's responses to prayer are timed perfectly. Peter was sleeping. His hands were chained to a soldier on each side. Two additional soldiers guarded the cell door (v. 6). The entire building was locked with an iron gate.

The angel of the Lord awoke Peter with a slap to the side, instructing him to get up. The

VanHorn

chains that bound Peter to the two guards "fell off" without making sufficient noise to arouse them (v. 7). The angel instructed Peter to dress and to follow him (v. 8).

Luke explains to us that Peter thought he was seeing a vision, not realizing that his release was actually happening (v. 9). Often we too pray

for God to act and then fail to look for God's response. Peter's seemingly surreal experience included getting past all four guards and the automatic (Greek *automate*) opening of the iron gate leading to the city.

Acknowledge God's work (v. 11). The angel left Peter shortly before the apostle realized that he was not merely seeing a vision but actually being released (vv. 10-11).

Peter's response was appropriate. He acknowledged that the Lord had sent an angel to deliver him. The plans of both Herod Agrippa and the Jews were totally frustrated.

Trusting in God means acknowledging his help and deliverance when it comes.

Failure to give God credit reveals a lack of faith and a spirit of cynicism inappropriate to true believers.

Don't be surprised (vv. 12-16). Peter went to the home of Mary the mother of John Mark. Rhoda, a servant of the house, went to the door, heard Peter's voice and then ran to tell the others, leaving Peter waiting outside (vv. 12-14).

The believers, who had been praying for Peter's release, thought Rhoda had lost her mind. Her insistence led them to believe Peter's angel was at the door (12:15).

These reactions to Peter's knock at the door reveal that everyone was caught off guard. They had prayed for Peter's release but had not expected it, at least not in the middle of the night.

Peter kept on knocking until they finally realized with full astonishment that he was free (v. 16). Their reactions and astonishment may indicate a lack of faith or a misunderstanding about how God would answer their prayer.

When we pray for others or ourselves in times of crisis, we

should pray believing that God will answer in a timely and appropriate way (James 1:6). John Mark figured in the story of the spread of Christianity to a greater degree later (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37; 2 Tim. 4:11).

Tell others (v. 17). Peter silenced the group of believers in order to instruct them to tell "James and the brothers" about his release.

"James" is most certainly the half brother of Jesus who, though not an apostle, ascended to the leadership of the Jerusalem church. "The brothers" could refer to Jesus' other half brothers (Matt. 13:55) but most likely refers to the other apostles and leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

With these instructions Peter left for another place, unknown and undisclosed. News of God's miraculous release of Peter would encourage the Christians in Jerusalem. We too encourage other believers when we trust God in prayer, acknowledge his work and tell others what he has done for us.

VanHorn is pastor of First Church, Columbia.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,

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Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Kirby Slaton, Children's Pastor at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Greenville, spontaneously volunteered to help prepare a Baptist Children's Village cottage for a new resident after hearing Chip Price speak of the new Residential Family Ministry Program at the Washington Associational Meeting. (In the background is Brenda Blakely, Case Manager, helping to prepare kitchen cabinets for use.)



Chip Price, Assistant Director of Programs for The Baptist Children's Village and Ali is a Brashear, Director of Residential Family Ministries discuss future plans for the program.

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IMB workers forced to leave Gaza Strip

TEL AVIV, Israel (BP) — "I don't feel in any danger, however our team has discussed evacuation procedures. I love my home here and the people, and at this point have no plans to leave ... [I] hope I don't have to."

Kim Taylor (all missionary names in this article have been changed) wrote that e-mail

between Israeli and Palestinian forces had left the Middle East peace agreement in tatters. At least 118 people, most of them Palestinians, had been killed.

IMB representatives forced to evacuate the West Bank and Gaza Strip are deeply concerned for those they left behind — and plead with

at getting away from the violence, their hearts were torn over the plight of friends and fellow believers they left behind.

"Despite the headaches of packing and leaving in a rush, the worst of it all was making a select few phone calls to local friends — people I might never see again if this is protracted," wrote IMB worker Candace Mitchell.

"For them to hear that we were leaving shattered them. They knew, of course, we had to go ... yet how disheartening to know that we could leave and they were hedged in more than ever before," she said.

The morning of Oct. 12 began calmly, despite mounting tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. Some of the IMB representatives were returning from the market when they first heard sirens and saw the crowds.

Sarah Jackson, who lives in the Gaza Strip, said she could see Israeli helicopters hovering over the area.

"Without warning, there was a huge explosion. At first I couldn't believe it," she said. "I stood in my bedroom thinking that sounded like an explosion, but surely it couldn't have been."

It was. The helicopters fired more than 20 rockets, hitting the police station, the radio and television studios, and Yassar Arafat's headquarters.

Expatriates were told to stay inside and not leave until the fighting eased. Finally, the U.S. Embassy gave them three hours to pack and evacuate.

Jackson said she and two other workers left in a car with Palestinian plates, driving slowly on the back roads with the headlights off.

Although the Palestinian police waved the car through, the officers said they would never make it through the Israeli checkpoint.

"We told them we were willing to try and then began our walk through no-man's land between the Palestinian territories and the Israeli territories," she said. "The whole way we were not sure what was around the bend, or behind the rocks. [We] simply depended on God's protection."

When Jackson reached the Israeli checkpoint without incident, she and the other two had no problems gaining entrance. The U.S. Embassy had called in advance to alert the Israelis to their arrival.

After they crossed the border, Jackson saw the first rays of the morning sun peak over the hills, signaling "the beginning of a new day in a land of questionable tomorrows," she said.

The full moon also shone brightly in the sky.

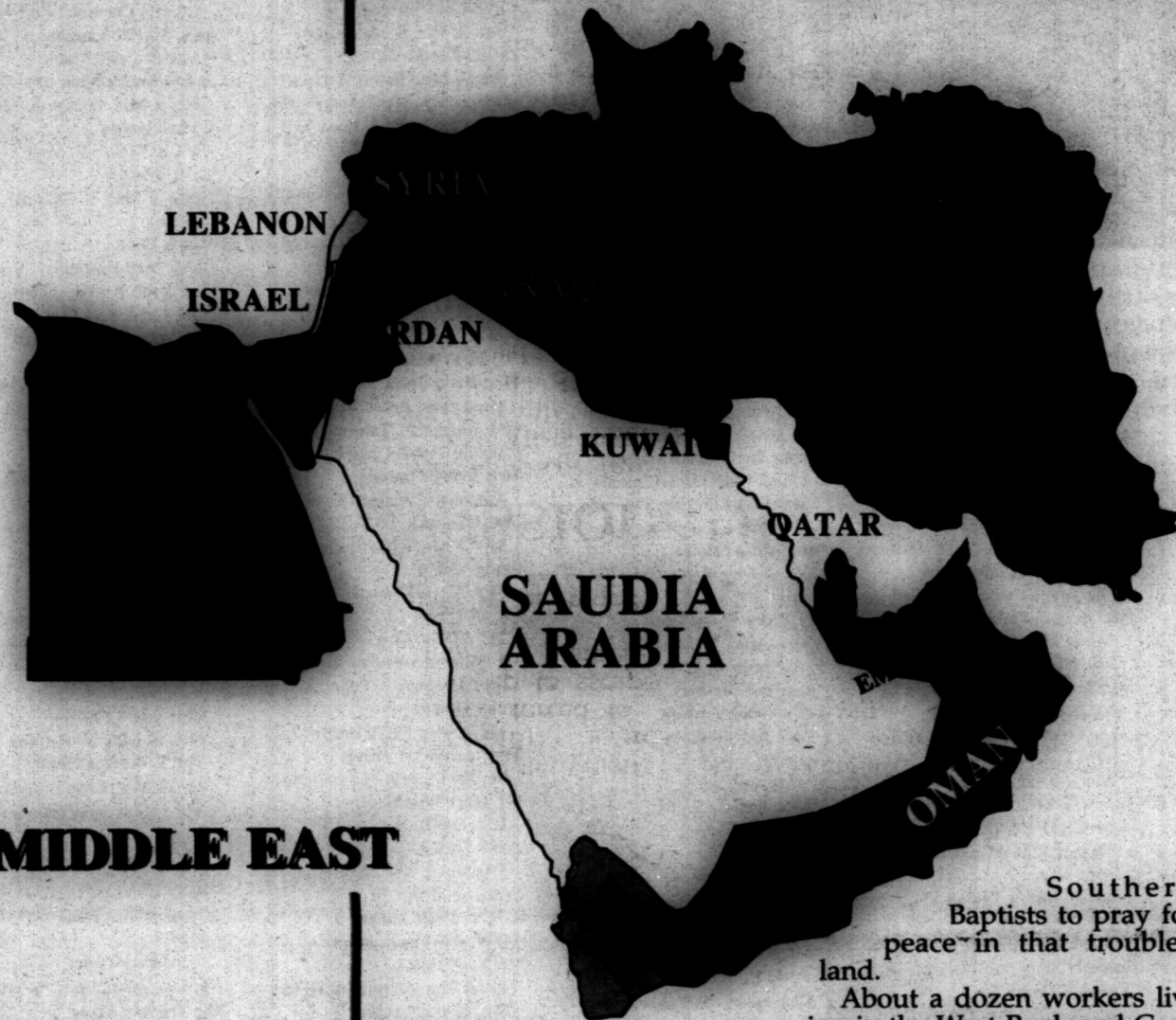
"It reminded me that God was there, looking down on us, watching and protecting us the entire way," Jones said.

Mitchell left the Gaza Strip with 10 American Christians early Thursday evening. When they reached the Palestinian border, the guards warned the group that the last vehicle to cross into Israeli territory had been hit with gunfire.

Nevertheless, the group safely crossed the border. Once out of the combat zone, the Americans turned to mobilizing prayer for the Palestinians and Israelis.

"Let's agree that somehow [God] will bring a new and great harvest from this and that eventually there will be two peoples peacefully living in this land side by side," Mitchell wrote.

Remembering Psalm 121, Jackson wrote, "May the same God who kept his eye on us and protected us watch over his land, and bring peace to all those who dwell there."



MIDDLE EAST

Southern Baptists to pray for peace in that troubled land.

About a dozen workers living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the advice of the United States embassy and left their homes Oct. 12 and 13 as violence intensified. Packing hastily, they drove along back roads toward heavily guarded border crossings.

message on Oct. 8. Four days later, the International Mission Board (IMB) representative was forced to leave the Gaza Strip to escape fighting between Israelis and Palestinians.

Weeks of bloody clashes

Though they expressed relief

Bibliocipher

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SL CMV TCM JYPXY TY,
OYU GST LKOOKA TY;
CMB AGYPY S CT, UGYPY
JGCOO COJK TV JYPX-
CMU WY; SL CMV TCM
JYPXY TY, GST ASOO TV
LCUGYP GKMKDP.

KQGM UAYOXY:

UAYMUV-JSN

Clue: T = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Second Timothy Four: One.

Missionaries help GAs make prayer reminders

BERNIE, Mo. (BP) — The quilt in 13-year-old Alicia Fralick's bedroom is no ordinary quilt. When she sees the bright colors of the different pieces of cloth that she stitched onto her quilt, she remembers to pray for missionaries.

"The one with the golden dragon is my favorite," Fralick said, referring to the patch sent from Japan.

Alicia, along with several of her fellow GA (Girls in Action) members from First Church, Bernie, Mo., made quilts with cloth sent to them from 29 missionaries around the world. Now with the quilts completed, the girls are praying for missionaries and sharing their stories with others. GA leader Daphne Briles believes the quilts will have a lasting impact on the way the girls view mission work.

"This is something they can have for their whole lives," said Briles, who also is director of Women on Mission for the church. "If someone doesn't tell them about WMU and missions, it is going to die out."

The project began last fall, shortly after the girls finished making a GA quilt for a young missionary girl in South

Africa. Soon after the quilt was completed, the girls wanted quilts for themselves.

Briles came up with the idea of "prayer quilts." She began to contact missionaries about sending material.

As each piece of cloth came in, the girls would talk about the missionaries who had

sent the material. Each piece of cloth came with the name of the missionary and where he or she served.

"We would learn about the missionary, find out where the country they were from was on the map and talk about the area," Briles said. "We would talk about the customs and food."

Fabric was sent from missionaries in Japan, England, Africa, South America, and elsewhere. "They were just thrilled to send them," she said. Pieces of cloth from Japan, Poland, and Russia were particularly popular among the GAs.

The group still receives prayer requests from about five missionaries almost every week.

After completing their quilts, the girls decided to use material left over to make a quilt for a church member who had been sick. Helen Cox, who was ill and confined to bed in a nursing home at the time, was glad to get it. "It was quite a conversation piece," she said. "I would tell people what this was, and I got to witness to quite a few people."



GAs of First Church, Bernie, Mo.